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OVERLAND TO OREGON

IN THE TRACKS OF LEWIS & CLARKE







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OVERLAND TO OREGON

IN THE TRACKS OF
LEWIS AND CLARKE

History of the First Emigration to Oregon in 1843

By

EDWARD HENRY LENOX

Edited by

ROBERT WHITAKER

Illustrations and Introduction by

R. MORGENIER

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1904

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By E. H. LENOX, Oakland, Cal.

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To the Memory
of the brave Christian pioneers of Oregon and the
Pacific Coast,
to their children and grand children,
I affectionately dedicate these
chronicles of the
Days of Eighteen Hundred and Forty-three
spent in crossing the
plains, streams and mountains of the mighty West
to rest and home on the virgin
soil of Oregon.

INTRODUCTORY

Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
—————What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us and become
Portions and parcels of the silent past.

AFTER a long life, spent in meeting the trials and tribulations of earth, and now awaiting tremulously, in the sear and yellow leaf, the call of my maker, my thoughts are reverting more and more to those early days, when, as a lusty youth of sixteen years, I participated in the first considerable emigration across the unknown West. The events of that memorable journey, and its subsequent, and far-reaching effects, stand as clearly developed mind pictures before me. That these may not fade and die out, I have undertaken the writing of this little volume.

My father, the late Captain David Thomas Lenox, whose death occurred in the year 1873,

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EDWARD HENRY LENOX.

OVERLAND TO OREGON

CHAPTER I.

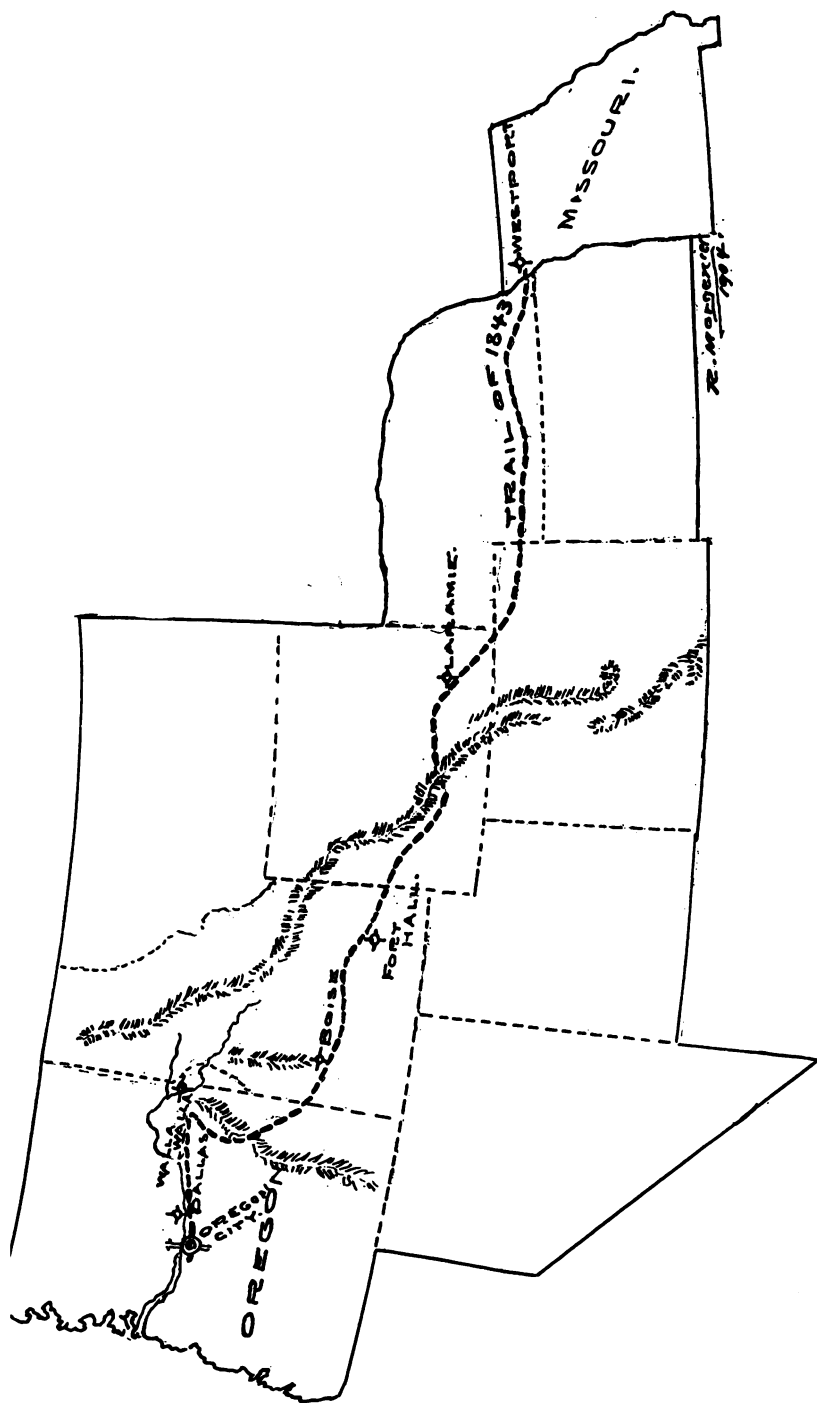
BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

I WAS born at Lexington, Kentucky, on the 19th of February, 1827. My father was David Thomas Lenox, of Catskill, New York. Left an orphan at an early age, he came West as far as Kentucky when he was about eighteen years old. He found employment with a Mr. George Swan of Lexington, Kentucky, and so commended himself in the course of the first year's labor, that afterwards he was employed for several years as overseer of the plantation, having a considerable body of men under his direction. It was here that he fell in love with Louisa Swan, the third daughter of his employer, and in the early part of 1826 they were married. I was the first fruits of this union.

In 1829 my father and mother together with several members of the Swan family re-

moved from Lexington, Kentucky to the neighborhood of Rushville, Schuyler County, Illinois. There my father bought land some two and one half miles out from town, and there I lived until I was about thirteen years old. My first memories are of the district school, of which my father himself was for some time a teacher.

The country in those days, was open and sparsely settled, for Illinois itself was still a pioneer state. I remember on one occasion that two of my uncles, mother's brothers, joined a company of neighbors, some forty in number, for a wolf hunt. I was only seven years old, and so of course, was not allowed to go, but as the fortunes of the day turned out. I was destined to have an interesting and important part in the program. I had a dog whose name was Bull. After the hunters had been gone for some time, we heard a great shouting. I rushed out with the dog, to see a big wolf coming directly towards us, about fifty yards in advance of the foremost hunters. Just beyond where I stood with the dog, was a forty acre lot, largely covered with sassafras trees. It was the evident object of the wolf to get into this timber, in which case he would probably have been secure against further pursuit that day. But when he was close at hand, I said to my dog Bull, "Sic



The Route Taken by Captain Lenox and His Party.

'm" and Bull at once tackled the wolf. But the wolf turned upon him so quickly and so savagely, that the dog was compelled to let go and was badly bitten. Again I said, "Sic 'em Bull" and again the faithful old dog tackled the wolf, throwing himself at its haunches. Again the wolf turned, and repeated his former tactics. But by this time the nearest of the hunters, one of my uncles, had come up. He had a heavily loaded whip with lead in the handle, with which he tried to strike the wolf, but dog and wolf were so mixed up that it was some time before he could get in a blow, and it looked as if his chances of killing the dog were quite as good as his chances of hitting the wolf. At length a well aimed blow laid the wolf out and the dog quickly finished the job.

Another incident I recall of our Rushville experience had to do with a trip to town. Every able-bodied man was at that time required to go to muster two days in the year, in May and October. It was in May of 1839, if my memory serves me right, that I went with my father into Rushville. A Mr. Little was standing by, when suddenly there lighted upon his stove-pipe hat the first comers of a great swarm of bees. He was alarmed, and was about to brush them off, when my father said to him, "Stand still,

Little, stand still, and I'll help you out." By this time the bees hung a great festoon from his head and face. My father sent a small boy hastily to get a big sheet, then spreading this out upon the ground just in front of Mr. Little's house, and leading Mr. Little along, he caused him to get down on his knees and lean over until the hanging bees touched the sheet. Then father took a stick and carefully brushed the bees from Mr. Little's head and face as if he were shaving him, and actually succeeded in getting them all off without anybody's receiving so much as a sting. Mr. Little was no worse for his experience, and was richer to the extent of a fine swarm of bees.

One of my mother's sisters, a Mrs. Joseph Masten, with her husband, had removed from Illinois to Todd's Creek, Missouri, in 1840. At their persuasion, the next year, my father having found opportunity to sell his land in Illinois at a good advance removed to the same locality in Missouri, where he bought eighty acres of land. If I remember rightly the price he paid was five dollars an acre. It was rich land, most of it covered with walnut, hickory, elm and other excellent timber, but there was not enough of it cleared to support father's large family, so father went to Fort Leavenworth



Dr. Marcus Whitman as He Appeared May 15, 1843.

across the Kansas line, and there secured government contracts to supply the troops with hay and corn. He was allowed to cut grass almost anywhere he found it, and hired men for this purpose and to help him haul it to Fort Leavenworth. Meanwhile I staid at home and did what farming I could in the open spaces of our timber. We raised corn and tobacco chiefly, and lived after the fashion of those days, a pretty strenuous life.

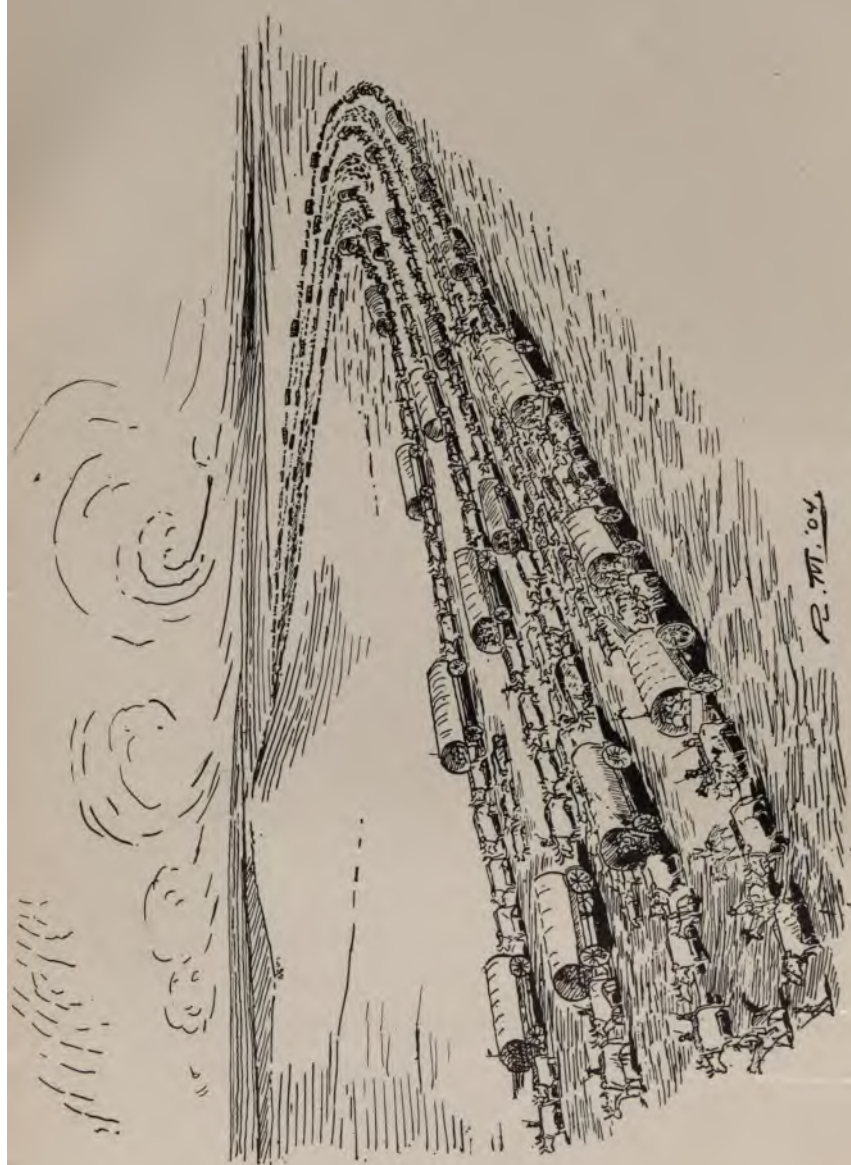


CHAPTER II.

LOOKING FARTHER WEST.

PETER H. Burnett, who was afterwards the first governor of California, was then a lawyer living in Platte City, Missouri about five miles west of where we lived. There was little doing in the law, and so to eke out his support, Mr. Burnett kept a store. The excitement in connection with the settlement of Oregon was stirring the hearts of the pioneers on the Mississippi frontier. My father heard about the Lynn bill from the men at Fort Leavenworth. This bill, it will be remembered, gave six hundred and forty acres of land to the head of every family that would settle in Oregon. Oregon became a sort of pioneer's paradise, and great were the stories told about it to induce emigrants to go. Mr. Burnett was one of the wayside orators who sought to gather a company of men to go West across the plains to Oregon.

One Saturday morning father said that he was going in to Platte City to hear Mr. Burnett



R. M. '04

Captain Burnett Starting, May 22, 1843. See Page 18.

talk about Oregon. I said. "Father, I want to go too," to which he replied, "all right son, come on," and together we went. When the hour for the address came, Mr. Burnett hauled a box out into the sidewalk, took his stand upon it, and began to tell us about the land flowing with milk and honey on the shores of the Pacific. Of his address that day, I remember this much, that he told of the great crops of wheat which it was possible to raise in Oregon, and pictured in glowing terms the richness of the soil and the attraction of the climate, and then with a little twinkle of humor in his eye, he said, "and they do say, gentlemen, they do say, that out in Oregon the pigs are running about under the great acorn trees, round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so that you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry." Of course at this everybody laughed. Burnett was a rather striking looking man of about ordinary height, with a very keen eye, a rather sloping forehead, light complexion, and was very ready of speech. He was a popular stump speaker, as his political campaign in California years after, abundantly showed.

Father was so moved upon by what he had heard at Fort Leavenworth and what he heard from Mr. Burnett, that he decided to join the

company that was going west to Oregon. So when Mr. Burnett said, "Now gentlemen, as many of you as would like to go, walk right into my store and put down your names in the book which I have there," father was the first to respond and the first to sign his name, whereupon Mr. Burnett slapped him heartily on the shoulder and said, "Well, Davy, if you are going, I know who to tie to." And the event justified his words.

Of our preparations for the journey I need not speak at length. The farm was soon sold, and our simple arrangements were soon made. About the most important thing that father did before we started was to buy a yoke of leader oxen that were celebrated leaders in crossing water. It was the virtues of this team that put me in the lead of our caravan all that summer. No matter how difficult the ford across a river, or how crooked it might be, they responded readily to my every word and turned quickly to right or left at my least command. I drove that team of oxen clear from Platte City, Missouri, to Whitman Station, twenty-five miles from Walla Walla on the Umatilla river. There we traded them for another team of oxen, which were in better condition, but I was exceedingly sorry to let my old companions go.

CHAPTER III.

ACROSS THE PLAINS.

WE left our home near Platte City, on April 9, 1843, and drove to the Westport crossing of the Missouri River, where we camped three miles out. The grass not being strong enough for our teams to go on, we were compelled to make a considerable wait there. On the 15th of May Dr. Marcus Whitman came into our camp from Washington, D. C., saying that he was just from the Capital and that he had a promise from President Tyler that the President would do nothing contrary to the interests of Oregon settlers for one year. We had a pilot by the name of Captain Gant, whom we had hired for eight hundred dollars to pilot us as far as Fort Hall, that being as far as he was acquainted with the country, so we engaged Dr. Whitman also to accompany us, father himself, paying eighty dollars to this end. There were

one hundred and twenty-seven wagons in our company and something over four hundred and fifty-five souls. The names of the men and women of this company are given in the appendix. On May 21st, we held an election to choose our captain, Peter H. Burnett was elected over Jesse Applegate, who was also a candidate. Our Captain arranged us in four columns for the journey. Six miles out on the 22nd brought us to a deep cut in a creek. Father and some of the other men went ahead and engaged in cutting down cotton wood trees, and felling them across the stream to make a rude bridge. We were all compelled to fall into single file. There was a vast amount of confusion and the teamsters generally got mad and raved at the Captain. "Well," said Burnett, "I throw up my job right here and now." The old gentleman Kaiser cried out, "There, see what you have done, you have no Captain now." Then said Daniel Matheney, "I move that D. T. Lenox be our Captain." William Beagle seconded the motion, and father was elected by acclamation. He took command of the company at once, although the position brought no compensation and a great deal of hard work. To him fell the selection of the camp every night, and he was up at five every morning,



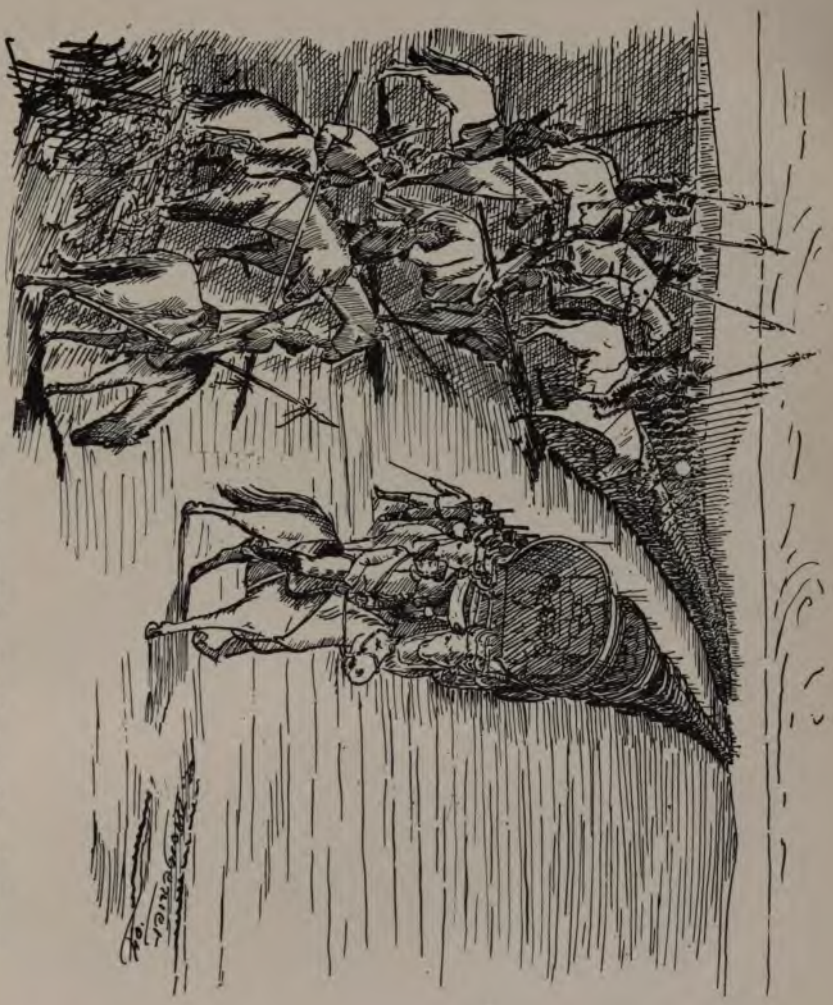
J. W. Nesmith Saving Wm. Vaughn at Caw River, May 24, 1843. See Page 21.

going from tent to wagon all over the camp, arousing the people for an early start.

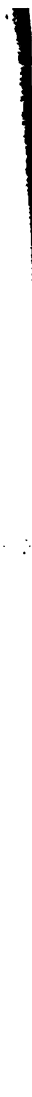
On the evening of the next day, we came to the edge of the Caw River. The river was considerably swollen on account of recent rains. There were no boats and of course, no bridges then, but a Frenchman in the neighborhood had three dugouts made of logs. These my father secured the next morning and with them made a platform, fastening the dugouts about four feet apart, and on this very primitive raft, the wagons were one by one ferried across. The better part of two days was spent in crossing the river. A thrilling episode in connection with the crossing of the Caw River was the experience of William Vaughn. He was swimming the river, leading some stock when he was suddenly seized with cramps, in the middle of the stream, and with a quick cry for help, went down. I was busy at father's tent, and rushed to the scene, but not being able to swim could give no help. Fortunately others more capable were at hand. J. W. Nesmith and P. G. Stewart rushed to his assistance. Nesmith was not more than twenty feet away when Vaughn went down the first time, yet, before he could get to him, the drowning man had gone down for the third time. Nesmith dived and brought him

up, but Vaughn after the manner of drowning men, clutched his rescuer so that Nesmith himself was in danger of being strangled. To this day, I can seem to hear Nesmith cry, "Let me go and I will save you! Let me go and I will save you!" But Nesmith was compelled to release himself by diving again. This time with the help of Stewart, he brought the now unconscious Vaughn to the shore. Nesmith called to me for a keg. I remembered that there was one in father's tent, and brought it as quickly as a boy's legs could carry me. Vaughn was laid over the keg and the water rolled out of him, while Stewart and I were kept busy pumping his arms. Even with these vigorous measures, Nesmith was on the point of giving up, for the man seemed to be utterly dead, but some almost imperceptible, convulsive motions gave him courage, and at length consciousness was restored to Vaughn. He was carried away to Cason's tent where warm blankets and warm coffee and rest so restored him that on the second day he was able to take his place again. I am told that Vaughn is still living some where in Oregon, being now past eighty years of age. He owed his life that day to the good sense and quick courage of J. W. Nesmith.

We rested a day at the Caw River because the rains were so heavy, and about Friday start-



Pawnee Indians Out on the War Path, Three Days Already Without Food, June 15, 1843. See Page 30.



ed on again. And what a day that first day was, west of the Caw. Rain, rain, rain, and mud up to the hubs of the wagons, stalled teams, and maddened, worn out drivers. My own oxen, which were far better fed than most of the oxen in the company, were hardly able to make any progress at all with our heavily loaded wagon. Our family generally rode in a lighter wagon. My wagon carried eleven hundred pounds of flour, three hundred pounds of bacon, one hundred pounds of sugar, one hundred pounds of dried apples, fifty pounds of coffee, fifty pounds of salt, a keg of syrup, a keg of tar, and innumerable other articles in smaller quantities. At the end of that weary day, I asked the pilot how far we had come, and he answered, to my dismay, "About two and a half miles." It seemed to me, that at that rate it would take us all eternity to reach the Pacific Coast. But we made a little better progress the next day, and there were many days afterwards when our company traveled a good many times two and one half miles. It was on the evening of this dreary day of such slow progress that my father asked J. W. Nesmith to take a little book which he handed him, and go through the camp and make a careful list of every man and boy

over fourteen years of age, for guard duty. This Nesmith did, and this valuable memoranda afterwards became the property of the Historic Pioneer Society of Portland, Oregon, to which Society I am indebted for a copy of it. Father afterwards regretted very much that he did not cause all the names of the women and children to be taken also, but these names I have been able to secure, quite generally at least, through personal recollection and by correspondence with the survivors of the company.

The large bands of cattle owned by Jesse and Lindsay Applegate, and Daniel Waldo could hardly be rounded up in the morning before ten o'clock, and so delayed us in our morning start, that after a few days it was amicably agreed to divide the company. Father took our two teams and with thirty-one other teams, whose occupants chose to accompany us, we went ahead. Those who were left behind, chose Jesse Applegate as Captain. Soon after this separation was made, father appointed four captains of the guard to have charge on each fourth night in succession. The nights were divided into four watches each, and the men and boys generally were expected to take their turn at guard duty. My own watch fell under the superintendence of Isaac W. Smith, who was



We were at Lunch when the Greatest Stampede of Buffalos, 3,500, Ran by Us, Plunging Over a Twenty Foot Precipice
Into the Great South Platte, June 15, 1843. See Page 30.

afterwards a member of the Oregon Legislature, but who died some years ago.

On that first Sunday morning father was resting in his tent, and mother and the four girls were taking it easy after an arduous week, when several from the families around us broke in impatiently upon us and wanted to know at what hour we were going to get off. "How is this, Captain Lenox," said one of them, "that you are not up and off this fine morning?" "We are not going to travel to-day," replied my father. "This is the Lord's day. The cattle need rest, and we need rest, and your families need rest." "Oh, you can't cram that down our throats," was the vigorous and irreverent reply; "We are going on." "Well," said Captain Lenox, "I have no authority to stop you, but you will find it to your interest to travel with a well guarded company, rather than to go it alone." Dr. Whitman was standing near, and broke in with the advice, "Gentlemen, you will do well to pay attention to your captain, and take his word. Otherwise, you may lose your scalps, and those of your families." This settled the matter and ever afterwards we had our Sunday rest.

Sometime that next week, father and Dr. Whitman and John Gant riding ahead of our

company, met three hundred Indian warriors, all on horse back, armed and painted red. They were a fearsome sight, and when we learned that they were on the warpath, and had been three days without food, there was nothing reassuring in the news. They ranged themselves grimly on one side of the path, and father gave them a three-year old, white cow out of our band of thirteen. They quickly lassoed it, killed it without much ceremony, and without so much as waiting to even scorch it, cut out great chunks of flesh and began to eat it raw. Bill Athey sang out, "Just look at the devils eating it raw." And so we left them eating the raw flesh, and some of them cooking portions of the beef, but we were careful to double our guard that night. By this time we were well started on the desert. Wood for cooking purposes was scarce, but we gathered buffalo chips, as buffalo manure was called, to make our kettles boil, and so went steadily on, day by day.

It is now some time in June. We are all at lunch at the noon hour, mother as I remember her, setting in her home-made chair with a rawhide bottom, when all of a sudden, there is a rushing "as of a mighty wind." We are all on our feet in a moment, wondering if it is some cyclone, or what the roaring may mean. Our



Captain Lenox Crossing the South Platte in Wagon Beds Covered with Buffalo Skins, July 2, 3 and 4, 1843. See Page 34.

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pilot shouts, "The buffalo are coming! The buffalo are coming! You women and children get behind those rocks on the right, and all of you men get out your guns and run to the rocks on the left, and shoot all you can as they come by, and I will go out and meet, and wheel in front of them, and turn them toward the men." With these words, he sprang on the back of his fine black mule, put spurs to him, and went flying round the hill that hid the buffalo from our sight. The pilot played his part grandly, for sure enough, here he came, leading a herd of over three thousand bellowing, fighting buffalo past the men. Seven of them fell dead as they passed the ledge of rock where the men were posted, and the great herd went plunging over the precipice twenty feet high, into the great South Platte River, two hundred yards from our wagons, where scores of them were drowned. Mother exclaimed, "Just see them floating down the river" and Dr. Whitman remarked, "Those are the drowned buffalos, drowned from falling over each other." Dr. Whitman's estimate of the herd was larger than the numbers that I have given, as he judged that there were four thousand buffalo that charged past us that day. We had plenty of fresh meat for awhile. We made camp at once, made fires

under scaffolds, cut the meat into buffalo steak, and dried large quantities of it to take with us on the way—this of course, after we had filled ourselves with the fresh meat.

It is the second of July, and we begin now to ferry our effects over the big South Platte River. We work hard at this until the night of the 4th, when our company including cattle and mules have all crossed, the cattle and mules as usual having to swim the raging stream. William Athey was our leader in crossing the stream. He swam over with a small cord in his mouth, and with this cord a larger rope was drawn across. This larger rope was used as a sort of cable for guiding the craft across.

Two days after crossing the great South Platte, two of our men did what I have never done. What was that? It was swearing. Father had us read the Ten Commandments so often, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," so that in all my school days and all my life I have been kept by Divine Grace from that sin. They had their guns drawn at half present arms, each refusing with much profanity to go on guard after midnight. Captain Lenox came running, secured each one's gun and shamed them out of such actions.

Now, let me tell you of Nathan Sutton's four-legged Indian. Sutton was in my division



Nate Sutton Shooting His Four Legged Indian, July 23, 1843. See Page 37.

for guard duty under Captain Isaac Smith. He went on guard one night at eight o'clock, and I was rolled in my blankets, expecting to be called at twelve. At ten the crack of Sutton's gun rang out, loud and clear. In came Nate, panting and scared. "What is up, Nate?" says Captain Smith. "Oh, I shot an Indian." By this time my father was on the scene and asked, "What's up, Captain Smith?" "Nate Sutton says he shot an Indian," was the reply. At this, Captain Lenox ordered the guard doubled until morning, so the Captain of the guard called us all up, and stationed us thirty paces apart. You can guess there was very little sleeping that night. Daylight came. Captain Smith appeared from the guard tent, rubbing his eyes and saying, "Now, Nate, show me your Indian." "Come right this way," answered Nate. "Be careful, he may be wounded and shoot you; right here in this tall grass, I saw him rise up, and draw his bow and arrow, and I let him have it." Closer investigation showed that Sutton's Indian was a large, three-hundred-dollar, yellow, Kentucky mule, one of the four attached to the wagon of the Martin brothers. Luckily, they had an extra mule which had been used for the saddle, but was now compelled to take the place of the one that Sut-

ton killed. Sutton never heard the last of that shot, but all summer long, the boys would twit him by crying out, "Oh, Nate, when are you going to shoot another four-legged Indian?"

We had a great deal of fun also with a man by the name of Mataney, who rode a very small jackass. Mataney was about six and a half feet tall, and when he was on his donkey, his feet nearly touched the ground. To him the boys would say, "Get off that rabbit and carry him!" Presently, J. W. Nesmith bought the jack for five hundred dollars, mounted him, and rode off without paying for him, so Mataney sued Nesmith. The company appointed Burnett as Judge. A trial was held at night. Nesmith pleaded non-jurisdiction, and won the case. The next day Nesmith rode the jack, and Mataney walked and knew not what to do, but along toward night, Nesmith having had his fill of the fun, got off, saying, "Here Mataney take this rabbit, I wouldn't have such a thing." Mataney mounted the little creature, and was happy once more.

One of our men, Edward Stephenson, traveling with J. A. Masters, fell sick of a fever. He became weaker every day, and at length died in the wagon as it rolled along one afternoon. The next morning he was buried beside



The Marney Trial. See page 38.

the road, and we left him there in the wilderness, one of the multitude of victims of the trip across the plains.



CHAPTER IV.

CROSSING THE ROCKIES.

SOME time in the late summer the Rocky Mountains became visible in the dim distance. Near the base we camped, and the next morning our pilot said, "Now for seven miles to the divide, where the water runs west to the Pacific." Well, I was never more surprised in my life, for I was looking for a steep hill and did not find it, the ascent was so gradual over the hill, where we came to a spring. Here my father was taken sick, and William Beagle sat up with him all night and doctored him, but the next day we resumed our journey and Captain Lenox was able to attend to his duties again.

Here we saw a grand sight, which is beyond my powers to describe. Away down the mountain side ahead of us, was an Indian village of three hundred tepees, or more. We were told that these tepees or wigwams, would average



Three Hundred Tepees Containing Fifteen Hundred Shoshone Indians Terribly Alarmed, August 10, 1843. See Page 45.

five occupants each, so that altogether there must have been about fifteen hundred Indians there. Their ponies were distant something like half a mile. Of a sudden we came into their view. There was a quick yell to their horse guards and their ponies were rapidly brought into the village. Men and squaws and children altogether tore down the wigwams. They ran to their ponies, the squaws lashed the tent-poles to them, leaving the ends dragging on the ground. Tepees, buffalo robes, cooking utensils, provisions, and everything pertaining to the village were gathered up in an incredibly short space of time, and in ways known only to Indians, were attached to their ponies, and before we were down the hillside, they were off for the hills that lay to the right. "Pegleg" Smith and another mountaineer came out from the village, telling us that they had tried to quell the Indians' fears, but it was all in vain. They were afraid of our "walking lodges." When we came to their camp fires we found everything cleaned up, the exodus having taken place while we were driving three miles.

Soon afterwards we came to Soda Springs and camped. The springs each had a different taste. One, called the Shooting Spring would spurt like a geyser, or like a jet from a fire-

man's hose, at intervals of about five minutes each, and would so continue for about half a minute, when the waters would recede. It was here that General Fremont visited our camp, telling us that he was working for the government in the mountains on the government survey.

So we traveled on. In coming down a hill my little brother five years old, fell over the front gate of my wagon to the ground. I picked him up fearing that he was killed, but his life was spared, as I have no doubt in answer to Grandfather Swan's prayer, which he prayed before we started. Sad to say, it happened otherwise with G. T. Naler's little boy who also fell over the front end of the wagon during our journey. In his case the great wheels rolled over the child's head, crushing it to pieces.

On arriving at Fort Hall, the commander of the Fort sent word that he wished to see our captain. Father mentioned at supper that he was to visit the commander of the fort, and I was allowed to go with him. Arrived at the fort we found a stockade of logs twenty feet high. We climbed a stairway around a cupola to Captain Grant's room, where we found a large fat Scotchman. He said, "Is this Captain

The Great Burnt River Hill, Steepest Hill on the Trail. See Page 53.



Lenox?" "Yes sir," was the answer. "I hear you are going through to the Columbia River this fall." "Yes sir." "But do not try that, you may lose all these women and children in the snow. You had better pack from here. I will trade you ponies for your cattle, as I did the forty-two emigrants last year." As proof to our eyes, there stood the nineteen wagons beside the fort, but father replied, "We are going to stay with the wagons until we are compelled to leave them." On returning to the camp we found Dr. Whitman at father's tent. "I have sad news, Captain Lenox," he said. I have just received this letter from my wife, by the hand of an Indian. The Indians have burned my mill, and she is afraid they will murder her, and wishes me to hurry home, so I must leave you at five in the morning. Sit down with me here, while I write out a way bill for you to follow, with camping places marked, and I will send Stickas, a Christian chief, to meet you and pilot you across the Blue Mountains."

The next morning, August 28th, we took up our daily travels, following a deep cut trail made by the pack animals, but without a pilot now. We soon came to the crooked, treacherous Snake River, where we lost two of our men, Ayres and Stringer. Seeing the difficulty which

I had in crossing, and discouraged by the hardships of the ford at this point, they insisted upon keeping the left side of the river, with the intention of making a crossing farther down at Fort Boise. They were compelled to cross before they reached the point which they had in view, by the closing in of the canyon. Ayres, who was an old man about sixty, got into trouble with his mules in crossing the stream. Stringer, who was about thirty years of age went to his relief, and both of them were drowned in sight of their women folks whom they had ferried across. The bodies were never recovered. Stringer's father and Ayres' son, with the women folks, managed to make their way on until they struck our trail which they followed through to the Columbia River.

The crossing of the Snake I shall not soon forget. The ford was exceedingly crooked, but here my leaders did their work well, and we made a crossing in safety. Soon we came to other hot springs. Our cattle being thirsty ran to drink, but one sniff was enough. A little later we made Fort Boise where we found a ford not so crooked. Soon after we came to Burnt River. The trail here led down a steep hill. I stopped on the brink and looked down, and asked anxiously, "Have we to go down that awful place?" "Yes,"



Captain David Thomas Lenox, Captain of the First Wagon Train Across the Rockies
to Dalles, Oregon, November 1, 1843.

said father, "there is no other way, son." Other drivers said, "Take off three yoke, Eddie." "Well, I must prospect the bottom first," I replied. We had to turn square up stream. The water was deep and swift; I went back and said: "Now I will rough-lock both hind wheels, and then six men stand on it and I will try it." The plan worked finely. At the water's edge I turned the leaders up stream, making the short turn all right. The next teamster's wagon upset in the swift water with Mrs. Athey. She was pulled out from underneath the wagon with nothing worse than a soaking. We followed the middle of the stream for some distance, and the trail led us from there ascending the hills, where we could look down on the Grande Ronde Falls. Here we were joined by Stickas, the promised pilot, who came holding out a letter from Dr. Whitman to my father. Stickas said, "Camp at the foot of the hill, at the edge of the Grande Ronde River." Stickas had with him his wife and two daughters, and at our evening devotions that night the two girls sang some beautiful hymns, and Stickas himself offered a short prayer. Stickas said, "Prepare your axes for you will need them tomorrow." The next morning Captain Lenox detailed sixteen men with axes to cut out logs. At half past eight

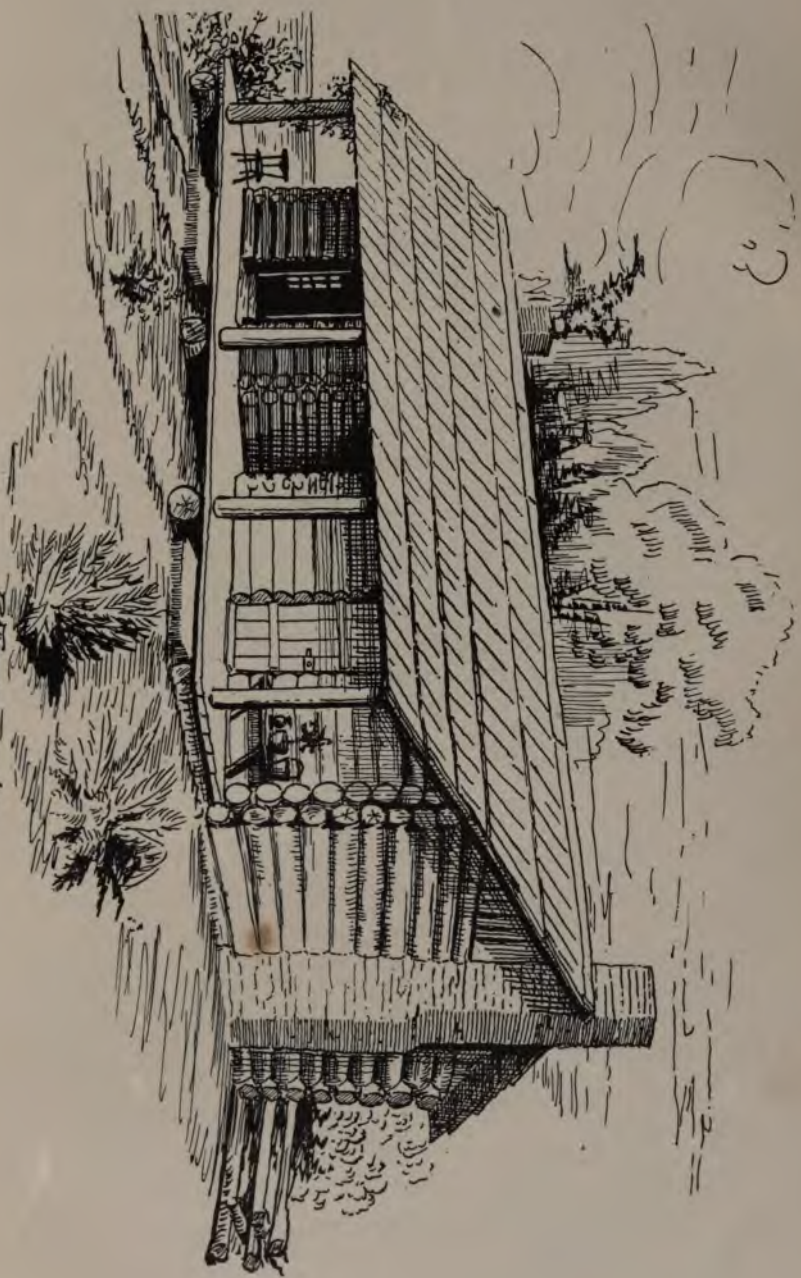
we started up the Blue Mountains, following the axe men, who cut out the logs from our way, as fast as we could travel. At length we arrived at Dr. Whitman's, to find that he was away at Mr. Spalding's Mission, one hundred and twenty-five miles distant. We found a Mr. Geiger in full charge of the Whitman Station. Here my father found it necessary to get new oxen, ours were so worn out, so we traded our five oxen for two fresh ones, with Mr. Geiger, working our cows to make out a full team. We stayed at Whitman Station into the third day, and then took up our journey to the Dalles.

We reached The Dalles, November 1, 1843. Here we hired two Indians with their large Chinook canoe, to take father, mother, and the other seven children in our family, to Oregon City. Others in the party also went down after the same fashion, some in canoes, some on rafts, there not being enough canoes to accommodate our company. Mr. Williams and myself and the other teamster who was in charge of our stock continued overland. We drove the stock fifteen miles down the river, and there swam them over two at a time, beside a canoe steered by an Indian. Thence we drove them to Fort Vancouver, where we crossed the river again, and so went on to Oregon City, where we ar-

rived on the 26th of November, 1843. Our company had really disbanded at The Dalles, making their way as fast as they could down the Columbia River, as the snow was already too deep to attempt to drive over the Cascade Mountains. After father had looked about for some three weeks, going as far as the mouth of the Columbia River, with a small company of his fellows, he decided to settle about twenty-two miles out from Oregon City, on the Tualitin plains. He bought a house from two brothers by the name of Kelsey, trading his mules for it. They took their mules and other possessions to Lake County in California, where they settled the town of Kelseyville, which was named after them.

It is hardly necessary to say that Oregon in the winter of 1843 was very sparsely settled. There were a few English settlers around us, and a few settlers in connection with the Methodist Mission at Salem. Portland was not yet begun. Father fell in love with the fine prairie land, and counted himself fortunate to be able to exchange his three mules for the primitive dwelling in which we lived for some time. The fields were not fenced at all, and so father and I went to work at once, making rails and fencing the fields. In the spring,

through the kindness of Dr. McLaughlin of Fort Vancouver, we got an order on one of our neighbors, a Mr. Buxton, for such wheat as we needed to sow and mill, the loan to be repaid when we delivered our crops on the river. The mill where our grain was ground, belonged to George Gale, and was about ten miles from where we lived. We had gone hardly more than half the distance, when the wagon was so mired, that our two yoke of weakened oxen were not able to draw it out and we were compelled to carry the grain a sack at a time, and so empty the wagon in order to get it out. The mill itself was a very primitive affair. There was no arrangement for bolting the flour, so that we had to be content with graham, pure and simple. Our family lived to a great extent on boiled peas, boiled wheat, with parched wheat and parched peas for coffee. This was our coffee for fifteen years. We got salt salmon at Vancouver and sometimes were able to get a deer. We had no doctors close at hand, but were frequently compelled to be our own physicians and surgeons. My sister Frances one day while chopping some bits of brush, which my little brother Samuel, six years old, was holding on the chopping block, chopped off the end of his thumb. I happened to be near by, and rushing



Captain David Thomas Lenox's First House in Oregon, May 25, 1844.

to him put the end of the thumb on, meanwhile sending my sister for needle and thread. I took three stitches in it, and did it up in sugar and lard. The third day it happened that Dr. Belknap, who lived some miles away, came riding by. Mother called him in and showed him the finger. "Who did that job?" asked the doctor, and when mother pointed to me, he said, "You ought to make a surgeon of him. I couldn't have done it any better myself."

Our life in Oregon in the main, was very quiet and uneventful. We raised wheat, oats, potatoes, peas, and all kinds of vegetables, without irrigation. The land responded readily to our efforts and only needed to be stirred to yield bountiful crops. A school was soon organized, and was held in the little Methodist church with a Mr. Ford from New York as our teacher. This Mr. Ford afterwards married my sister Mary, with whom he removed to New York and afterwards to Texas.

I stayed in Oregon for sixteen years, during which time I saw the incoming of many settlers, and saw the state take form. Soon after we reached Oregon, in my father's house was organized the first Baptist Sunday School on the Pacific Coast, May 25, 1844, and on the same day was organized the first Baptist Church west

of the Rocky Mountains. I was a member of this Sunday School, and in May 1848 was received into this first Baptist Church of the Pacific Coast, under the pastorate of Rev. Hezekiah Johnson. The first superintendent of our Sunday School was Henry Sewell, who was a member of our company which came across the plains. My father and mother were both constituent members of the church and Sunday School.

Inasmuch as the Whitman story has been called in question by some modern scholars, I think it worth while to give my testimony. Edward G. Bourne writing in the Yale Review, for February 17, 1902, refers to the Whitman ride as fictitious, and speaks contemptuously of the persistence of this "myth." Now it was my lot as a boy of sixteen, both to see Dr. Whitman on his return trip to Oregon, and to hear him tell how he had crossed the mountains in 1842, to see President Tyler and Daniel Webster, and prevailed on them not to do anything detrimental to the Oregon issue for one year, until the immigrants could get there and occupy it. And this I know, that that noble christian man Marcus Whitman, rode side by side with my father Captain David Lenox, looking up camping places, for food and water, all that summer

of 1843. He came into our camp on the 15th of May, dressed in buckskin, and told us he was just from Washington, D. C., and that his home was in Eastern Oregon, so that it is useless for Bourne to try to rob him now of the credit for the great work which Whitman did sixty years ago.



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

APPENDIX

MEMBERS OF THE FIRST EMIGRATION PARTY TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER Nov. 1, 1843.

Applegate, Jesse	Brown, Martin
Applegate, Charles	Brown, Oris
Applegate, Lindsay	Black, J. P.
Athey, James	Bane, Layton
Athey, William	Baker, Andrew
Atkinson, John	Burnett, Dwight J.
Arthur, Wm.	Baker, John G.
Arthur, Robert	Beagle, William
Arthur, David	Boyd, Levy
Ayres, Miles	Baker, William
Butler, Amon	Biddle, Nicholas
Brooke, George	Braidy, James
Burnett, Peter H.	Beadle, George
Bird, David	Boardman, ———
Brown, Thomas A.	Baldrige, Wm.
Blevens, Alexander	Cason, F. C.
Brooks, John P.	Cason, James

Chapman, Wm.	David, Burrell
Cox, John	Dailey, George
Champ, Jacob	Doherty, John
Cooper, L. C.	Dason, ———
Cone, James	Eaton, Charles
Childers, Moses	Etehell, James
Carey, Miles	Emerick, Solomon
Cochran, Thomas	Eaker, John W.
Clymour, L.	Edson, E. G.
Copenhagen, John	East, John W.
Caton, J. H.	Everman, Ninimon
Chappel, Alfred	Ford, Nineveh
Cronin, David	Ford, Ephriam
Cozine, Samuel	Ford, Minrod
Constable, Benedict	Ford, John
Constable, Edward	Francis, Alexander
Childs, Joseph	Frazier, Abner
Clark, Ransom	Frazier, Wm.
Campbell, John G.	Fowler, Wm.
Chapman, Wm.	Fowler, Wm. J.
Chase, James	Fowler, Henry
Dodd, Solomon	Fairly, Stephen
De Mant, Wm. C.	Fendall, Charles
Dougherty, W. P.	Gantt, John
Day, William	Gray, Chiley B.
Duncan, James	Garrison, Enoch
Dorin, Jacob	Garrison, J. W.
Davis, Thomas	Garrison, W. J.
Delany, Daniel	Gardner, Samuel
Delany, Daniel, Jr.	Gardner, Wm.
Delany, William	Gilmore, Mat.
Davis, J. H.	Goodman, Richard

Gilpin, Major	Hewett, Henry
Gray, George	Hargrove, Wm.
Haggard, B.	Hoyt, A.
Hide, H. R.	Holman, John
Holmes, Wm.	Holman, Daniel
Holmes, Riley A.	Harrigas, B.
Hobson, John	James, Calvin
Hobson, Wm.	Jackson, John B.
Hembree, Andrew	Jones, John
Hembree, J. J.	Johnson, Overton
Hembree, James	Keyser, Thomas
Hembree, A. J.	Keyser, J. B.
Hall, Samuel B.	Keyser, Pleasant
Honk, James	Kelsey, L.
Hughes, Wm. P.	Kelsey, ———
Hendrick, Abijah	Lenox, David Thomas
Hays, James	Lenox, Edward H.
Hensley, Thomas J.	Lenox, Washington
Holley, B.	Lenox, David
Hunt, Henry	Lenox, S. S.
Holderness, S. M.	Layson, Aaron
Hutchins, Isaac	Looney, Jesse
Husted, A.	Long, John E.
Hess, Joseph	Lee, H. A. G.
Hann, Jacob	Lugur, F.
Howell, Wm.	Linebarger, Lew.
Howell, Weslye	Linebarger, John
Howell, G. W.	Linger, A.
Howell, Thomas E.	Laswell, Isaac
Hill, Henry	Loughborough, G.
Hill, William	Little, Milton
Hill, Almorán	Luther, ———

Waldo, Daniel	Zachary, Alexander
Waldo, David	Zachary, John
Waldo, William	

NAMES OF THE WOMEN.

Athey, Mrs. James	Hobson, Miss Mary
Applegate, Mrs. Cynthia	Hess, Mrs. Joe
Ann	Hewett, Mrs. Henry
Applegate, Malinda	Keizer, Mrs. Thomas
Applegate, Betsey	Linebarger, Mrs.
Baker, Mrs. I. G.	Loonie, Mrs. Jessie
Blevens, Mrs. A.	Lenox, Mrs. Louesa
Burnett, Harriet Rogers	Lenox, Miss Mary
Burnett, Lettita M.	Lenox, Miss Elizabeth
Burnett, Romietta J.	Lenox, Miss Francis
Burnett, Sarah C.	Lenox, Miss Amanda
Burnett, John M.	Malone, Mrs. Madison
Burnett, Armstead	Milican, Miss Lucinda
Beagle, Mrs. Wm.	Matheney, Mrs. Daniel
Constable, Mrs. Edward	Matheney, Miss Charlotte
Carey, Mrs. Miles	Matheney, Miss Bell
East, Mrs. John	Masters, Mrs. A. J.
Frazier, Mrs. D.	Mills, Mrs. John
Gilmore, Mrs. Nat.	Mills, Mrs. Isaac
Garrison, Mrs. Enoch	Naylor, Mrs. Thomas
Hembree, Mrs. Andey	Newby, Mrs. W. T.
Hembree, Mrs. Jordan	Olinger, Mrs. A.
Hembree, Mrs. Absalom	Owens, Mrs. Thomas A.
Hill, Mrs. Sarah Jane	Pennington, Mrs. J. B.
Hill, Mrs. Almaran	Painter, Mrs. Samuel
Hill, Miss Dianta	

Strait, Mrs. Hiram	Waldo, Mrs. Malindo
Stoughton, Mrs. Alexander	Zachary, Mrs. Alexander
Williams, Mrs. Harriet	Zachary, Miss Polly
Williams, Mrs. David	Zachary, Miss Lucetta





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